



CONGRESSMAN HENRY A. WAXMAN NEWS

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WAXMAN BLASTS CONGRESSIONAL VISIT WITH ARAFAT

Congressman Henry A. Waxman (D-Los Angeles) accused House members, who met recently with PLO Chief Yasser Arafat, of being "long-standing enemies of Israel who wittingly or unwittingly allowed themselves to be used as pawns in the PLO propaganda game."

Waxman expressed the belief that the PLO is trying to exploit the current siege of Beirut to manipulate the United States into betraying Israel and its own best interests by recognizing the PLO and negotiating directly with the terrorist group.

Waxman said,

"Congressman Paul H. McCloskey, Israel's most outspoken congressional opponent and leader of the delegation, made a statement and waved a piece of paper signed by Arafat. Neither McCloskey's remarks nor the Arafat "document" gave any evidence that the PLO has come close to meeting the conditions that would warrant any change in American policy towards it. They have not recognized the right of the State of Israel to exist. Neither have they renounced warfare or terrorism as instruments for conduct of their foreign policy."

Waxman praised the one member of the delegation, Rep. Elliott H. Levitas (D-Georgia), who refused to meet with Arafat and flatly contradicted McCloskey's claims. Like Waxman, Levitas concluded that the Arafat letter and remarks made by the terrorist leader to the congressional delegation reflected an effort by the PLO to extract diplomatic advantages out of the war in Lebanon and did not represent any change in the PLO's attitude of implacable hostility towards Israel.

Waxman concluded, I am ashamed and appalled that members of Congress would allow themselves to be used for PLO propaganda purposes during a period when the lives of tens of thousands of human beings hang in the balance. This is the time for full congressional support for efforts to get the six thousand PLO guerrillas and their Syrian supporters out of Lebanon. Were these goals reached, the Israelis, too, would leave Lebanon--giving that country its first chance in more than a decade for true freedom and independence. Congressional meddling on behalf of the PLO can only undermine current peace efforts.